

School-based Programs

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Tobacco Facts

Young people at risk

Fifty-five children in Washington start smoking every day. Surveys of adult smokers in Washington show that about half of them had first tried cigarettes by age 14, and 70 percent of them were smoking regularly before they left high school.

There are about 87,000 youth who smoke in Washington.

Percent of youth smoking by grade:
Grade 6 – 2 percent
Grade 8 – 9 percent
Grade 10 – 15 percent
Grade 12 – 23 percent

More than half of Washington kids surveyed had practiced saying no to tobacco in school.

About half of kids surveyed said they had been taught an anti-tobacco lesson in school at least four times.

Nearly 80 percent of kids who got those lessons said the lessons made them think about whether or not to use tobacco.

Implementing school-based efforts

To help keep kids from starting to use tobacco, the Department of Health's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program provides funding and consultation to schools through Washington's nine Educational Service Districts. School programs:

- Educate students about the dangers of tobacco.
- Promote strong "no tobacco use attitudes" among students.
- Provide students with skills to resist peer pressure to use tobacco.

The programs focus on students in grades 5-9, the grades in which most tobacco use begins.

An Oregon study showed that comprehensive school programs are far more effective at reducing student tobacco use than programs that rely on lessons alone. Washington used that information and the federal government's *Guidelines for School Health Programs* in designing its school programs. The guidelines call for comprehensive programs that:

- Implement a research-based, anti-tobacco curriculum.
- Train teachers and staff to implement curricula.
- Develop, strengthen, and enforce tobacco-free school policies.
- Support quit programs for students who use tobacco.
- Involve parents, families, students, staff, local government, and other community members in the school's anti-tobacco program efforts.
- Conduct regular assessments of the school program.

Forging working partnerships

Efforts with Washington schools involve broad collaboration across several public and non-profit agencies, including the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, school districts, local health departments, and community-based organizations.

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The Educational Service Districts, with their proven ability to deliver regional assistance to all 296 Washington school districts, coordinate the distribution of state resources to schools. The Educational Service Districts provide information to schools, train school staff, and hold schools accountable for measurable outcomes.

Visit the youth Web site at:
UnfilteredTV.com

Find out more about
secondhand smoke:
SecondhandSmokesYou.com

Find out more about the
Tobacco Quit Line at:
quitline.com

For more information on
tobacco prevention:
www.doh.wa.gov/tobacco/

Measuring program success

Each Educational Service District submits a work plan for the anti-tobacco activities it will conduct in its member school districts during the coming year, and reports its progress monthly to the Department of Health.

A comprehensive approach to fighting tobacco use

Research shows that state anti-tobacco programs must be broad-based and comprehensive to be effective. In addition to supporting school programs, Washington's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program provides services to help people quit, restricts the ability of kids to get tobacco, encourages smoke-free environments, supports community-based programs, conducts public awareness and media campaigns, and evaluates the effectiveness of state and local program activities. Like all program elements, school programs are based on scientifically proven methods and the experiences of successful school anti-tobacco programs in other states.